

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 – 16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) An introducing apparatus comprising:

an elongate tubular sheath having an external diameter, the sheath having a bore including an internal diameter sized to receive a dilator there through, the sheath comprising a separable sheath;

a side member coupled along the sheath;

the sheath extending from a distal end to a proximal end;

~~the sheath including~~ at least one tab extending away from a longitudinal axis of the sheath, the at least one tab disposed between the side member and the elongate tubular sheath;  
and

a releasable side port assembly coupled with the ~~sheath~~ side member with a coupling, and the releasable side port assembly includes one or more features allowing for the releasable side port assembly to be released from the ~~sheath~~ side member without damage or separation of the sheath or the releasable side port assembly.

18. (Currently Amended) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the releasable side port assembly is coupled with the ~~sheath~~ side member with a snap-fit connection.

19. (Currently Amended) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the releasable side port assembly is threadingly coupled with the ~~sheath~~ side member.

20. (Currently Amended) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, further comprising a valve disposed between the sheath and the releasable side port assembly.

21. (Original) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, further comprising a movable valve assembly movably coupled relative to the at least one tab, the moveable valve assembly adapted to move from a first position to a second position, in the first position the movable valve assembly disposed through the longitudinal axis of the sheath, in the second position the movable valve assembly disposed away from the longitudinal axis of the sheath.

22. (Original) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, further comprising a valve assembly coupled with the sheath.

23. (Previously Presented) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 22, further comprising a valve opening component associated with the releasable side port assembly.

24. (Previously Presented) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the valve opening component includes a passage permitting introduction of fluids through the releasable side port assembly.

25. (Previously Presented) The introducing apparatus as recited in claim 17, further comprising a valve assembly coupled relative to the at least one tab and disposed along the longitudinal axis of the sheath.

26. (Currently Amended) An introducer apparatus comprising:

a sheath including a sheath coupling member and a sheath hub, the sheath extending from a proximal portion to a distal portion, the sheath coupling member disposed along the sheath hub;

a side port assembly including a side port coupling member;

the side port coupling member releasably coupled with the sheath coupling member along the sheath hub; and

the side port assembly having a coupled position and an uncoupled position.

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27. (Previously Presented) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 26, further comprising a valve member associated with the sheath coupling member, the valve member sealing the sheath when the side port assembly is in the uncoupled position.
28. (Currently Amended) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 27, wherein the valve member is disposed within the sheath coupling member.
29. (Previously Presented) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 27, wherein the valve member is disposed between the sheath and the side port assembly.
30. (Previously Presented) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 26, further comprising a valve opening component associated with the side port coupling member.
31. (Previously Presented) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 30, wherein the valve opening component includes a passage permitting introduction of fluids through the side portion assembly.
32. (Previously Presented) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim 26, further comprising a cap coupled with the sheath coupling member when the side port assembly is in an uncoupled position.
33. (Currently Amended) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[25]]~~ 26, wherein the side port assembly further includes a stop cock assembly.
34. (Currently Amended) The introducer apparatus as recited in claim ~~[[31]]~~ 32, wherein the cap is coupled with the sheath coupling member and provides a seal for the sheath coupling member when the side port assembly is in an uncoupled position.
35. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

providing an introducer including a sheath, a side port, and a side port assembly releasably coupled with the sheath, the sheath further including a side port valve, the side port assembly having a coupled position;

uncoupling the side port assembly from the coupled position; and

sealing the side port of the introducer with the side port valve after the side port assembly is removed from the coupled position.

36. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 35, wherein uncoupling the side port assembly includes uncoupling a snap fit coupling.

37. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 35, wherein uncoupling the side port assembly includes uncoupling a threaded coupling.

38. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 37, further comprising coupling the side port assembly to the coupled position and opening the side port valve with a valve opening component associated with ~~[[the]]~~ a side port coupling member.

39. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 38, further comprising permitting passage of fluids through the valve opening component.

40. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 35, further comprising coupling a cap with the sheath after uncoupling the side port assembly.